

Real Accountability and Flexibility: Empower School Leaders. Bring Success to Failing Schools.

All Hoosier children deserve an education that will prepare them for success in school and beyond. At the state level, we will hold all schools accountable and do whatever is necessary to make sure every student has access to high-quality educational opportunities — especially the 24,826 students who currently attend Indiana’s chronically low-performing schools. Therefore, we must provide the state all necessary tools to intervene when local leadership has failed to offer a quality education to children. To achieve the swift and dramatic improvement required, we must act now to ensure state intervention in these schools is successful.

Allow time. Expect improvement.

We Must . . .

- Set rigorous annual performance goals for turnaround managers.
- Empower the State Board of Education (SBE) to extend or cancel a contract at any time and select another turnaround manager if the current manager is not achieving results for students. If two managers fail to improve the school, it will be returned to the corporation.

Why?

- Research shows it takes three to five years to improve the performance and culture in a failing school. Managers designated to turn around failing schools will be given five-year contracts to reshape them. However, these turnaround managers must be closely and continuously monitored throughout contract periods to ensure gains in student performance.

Provide flexibility to drive student results.

We Must . . .

- Free these school leaders and turnaround managers from rigid collective bargaining agreements between school corporations and teachers’ unions that prevent decisions prioritizing the best interests of students.
- In the fourth and/or fifth year a school is placed in the lowest accountability category, give school corporations the same flexibility that will be afforded turnaround managers if intervention were to occur.

Why?

- Students attending our most disadvantaged schools must have access to great teachers and leaders to achieve rapid learning gains and catch up to their peers. School leaders facing potential state intervention as well as designated turnaround managers must have

the authority to make the staffing decisions that will put the best educators in the classroom.

Create local options to sustain success after intervention.

We must . . .

- Make it possible to grant independent status to a turnaround school. In this case, the SBE will appoint a school board to govern it. This board will then have the flexibility to work with the community to decide what course of action will best serve students. Options include remaining independent, contracting with a manager or another school, applying for charter status, or turning over control to the original or another school corporation.

Why?

- Once a school improves, we want to avoid putting it back into the system or situation that caused it to fail in the first place. The SBE will work with local communities to determine the best course for students once a school is on a solid path to success.

Empower parents to demand better schools for their children.

We Must:

- Create a parent trigger to be exercised the fourth consecutive year a school is placed in the lowest accountability category. If at least 51 percent of the students' parents sign a petition, the SBE may intervene early in a failing school.

Why?

- Parents are the most important people in a student's life, but they too often have little say in their children's education.